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Is body mass index (BMI) an adequate tool to assess nutritional status of power sportsperson?

Mini Joseph and Nihal Thomas

Christian Medical College & Hospital, India

Introduction: Weightlifting is a power sport placing intense physical demands on the individual. The body composition of weightlifters is considerably different from that of other athletes.

Materials & Methods: This cross-sectional study was done on 30 selected elite professional male weightlifters in the age group of 18-28 years who were actively competing at national/international level from Vellore District in Tamil Nadu, India. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. Their anthropometric measurements and body composition were assessed and analysed. All data were analysed using SPSS 16.0 for Windows.

Results & Discussions: The mean age of the participants was 21.5 ± 2.87 years. The average duration of competitive weightlifting was 5.04 ± 2.68 years. The mean height was 168.83 ± 6.32 cm and mean weight was 75.95 ± 14.73 kg. Their mean BMI indicated that they were overweight, (26.09 ± 4.28) inspite of a low fat percentage of 15.2 ± 5.3 % (obtained by DXA [Hologic Delphi W (S/N 70471 DXA scanner)]). They had a high mean lean body mass of 60.9 ± 9.2 kg indicating a well-developed musculature.

Conclusion: Thus we opine that BMI should be used as a sole tool to assess nutritional status but must be used in conjunction with the body composition to get the actual picture.

Biography

Mini Joseph is currently working as Assistant Professor in Food & Nutrition at Government College for Women, Trivandrum, Kerala. She is presently pursuing her Post-doctoral fellowship at the Department of Endocrinology, Diabetes & Metabolism, at Christian Medical College, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. She is recipient of Young Scientist Award from the Nutrition Society of India 2012. Her interests lie in community nutrition, energy expenditure research, sports nutrition and diabetes.

minijoseph66@yahoo.in

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